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Conservancy Board Approves Final Plan to Restore the Upper Truckee Marsh

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South Lake Tahoe, Calif. After decades of planning, analysis, and public input, the California Tahoe Conservancy Board today approved the final plan to restore the largest remaining wetland in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Upper Truckee River and Marsh Restoration Project will restore over 500 acres of highly disturbed wetland habitat, improving the natural filtration capacity of the Marsh and reducing a major source of fine sediment that clouds Tahoe's famed lake clarity.

"Today's actions are a major milestone in our strategy to restore and preserve Tahoe's largest wetland and watershed," said California Tahoe Conservancy Executive Director Patrick Wright. "The Marsh has been the highest priority ecosystem and watershed management project in the Tahoe Basin for nearly three decades."

The Upper Truckee River once flowed over the vast expanse of the Marsh, settling and filtering sediment and other pollutants from the river before they entered Lake Tahoe. But in the decades since the free-flowing river was channeled into a man-made canal to provide room for the Tahoe Keys development, the Marsh has largely dried up and no longer filters pollutants or provides suitable habitat for a broad range of sensitive wetland and wildlife communities.

The Conservancy began acquiring land in the Marsh in the 1980s and completed a 12-acre restoration project and a popular walking trail from the Tahoe Keys Marina to the lake in 2001.

Under the Final Plan approved today, the Conservancy will fill in the oversized river channel and reestablish the braided network of waterways that once spread over the meadow and naturally filtered pollutants. The

project will improve water quality, lake clarity, and wildlife habitat for many plants and animals, including the Basin's largest population of Tahoe yellow cress, a rare and sensitive species that grows nowhere else in the world.

The Board also approved the environmental impact reports and findings associated with the project, and authorized staff to seek up to \$12,360,000 for the final phases of planning and construction, which could begin in 2019.

At the same meeting, the Board approved two land transfers to facilitate new drinking water treatment and bike trail projects on Tahoe's west and north shore, and a planning grant to the Tahoe Fund to develop a strategy for improving or expanding environmental interpretation facilities in the Basin.

Established in 1984, the mission of the Tahoe Conservancy is to lead California's efforts to restore and enhance the extraordinary natural and recreational resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin. For more information, visit <http://tahoe.ca.gov>.